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To the Editor
The Shield
4808 Bergenline Ave.
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Having left public employment a year ago, I feel free, as a citizen and taxpayer, to comment on the report of the Governor's Management Commission, particularly that portion relating to the Civil Service. My opinions are based on experience and observation during a fairly long period of work in supervisory and administrative assignments in a State department.


Success of the Civil Service System depends largely upon complete acceptance, by supervisors and managers, of the responsibilities placed upon them by the rules and regulations of the Service. This acceptance requires meticulous handling of personnel matters, aware and effective supervision to keep abreast of what is going on. It means conscientious effort and plain work at all levels of supervision and management; difficult and frustrating at times, often unpleasant. But this is what supervisors and managers are paid for.

From my observations, I conclude that most of the complaints of employees against Civil Service actually arise from failure of supervisors or managers to understand, accept, and fully discharge their responsibilities, not the failure or inadequacy of Civil Service procedures. Here, I am not referring to cases where these procedures were circumvented or violated for personal or other reasons. I easily identified the harmful results of my own oversights or failures in this area of responsibility.

Contrary to what seems to be popular belief, drows and slackers can be disciplined, their attitude and production improved; failing this, their services can be terminated, all in accordance with Civil Service procedures. Performance of willing, conscientious employees can be improved by sympathetic, understanding supervision. Full advantage can be taken of the talent of outstanding employees to enable them to make their maximum contribution and be reasonably content to do so. Reorganizations of units or departments, carefully thought through and effectively documented, can be carried out.

These things are not simple to accomplish, but they can be done when management does its whole job. The results can produce a level of employee morale and production exceeding that generally found in private industry. Finally, the two obligations of management in public employment are to get from the employee what is due the government, and from government what is due the employee. If the rules are right, management finds no conflict in meeting both obligations. The Civil Service System embodies the best set of rules to aid management in its dual task.

No system devised by human beings is perfect. The Civil Service System is no exception. We should constantly try to improve it, and I saw steady improvement during the term of my employment. To weaken it would be unfortunate; to abolish it, disastrous.

Very truly yours,

D. J. Henderson